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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/014,712	12/14/2001	Gottlieb-Georg Lindner	213142US0	4111
22850	7590	04/21/2004	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			NGUYEN, NGOC YEN M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1754	

DATE MAILED: 04/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/014,712

Applicant(s)

LINDNER ET AL.

Examiner

Ngoc-Yen M. Nguyen

Art Unit

1754

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 January 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 18-20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-17 are allowed with respect to the elected species, i.e., Zr.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujii et al (5,720,806).

Fujii '806 discloses a filler which is comprised of an amorphous silica containing from 0.3 to 1.0% by weight of aluminum oxide and having a BET specific surface area within a range from 250-400 m²/g, a mean particle size within a range of from 3.6 to 10 microns (note claim 1). The surface area of Fujii '806 overlaps the claimed range. Overlapping ranges create a prima facie case of obviousness, In re Malagari, 182 USPQ 549.

As disclosed in the examples of Fujii '806, the Al-doped silica is formed by a precipitation method, the Al and the Si are simultaneous precipitated, thus, the distribution of Al in the silica would inherently be uniform as required in the instant claims and because of this, the maximum surface concentration of the foreign atoms, ie. Al, for the product of Fujii '806 would inherently be the same as claimed.

Art Unit: 1754

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vanel (5,852,099).

Vanel discloses that precipitated silicas, which are aluminum “doped” silicas, have BET surface area of $\leq 450 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ (note column 2, lines 50-55). The aluminum content is from 0.35 wt% to 3wt% (note column 3, lines 35-42). This range would create at least an overlapping range for the maximum surface concentration of the Al.

With respect to the encompassing and overlapping ranges previously discussed, the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to select the portion of the prior art’s range which is within the range of the applicants’ claims because it has been held prima facie case of obviousness to select a value in a known range by optimization for the results. *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215. Additionally, the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time invention was made to have selected the overlapping portion of the range disclosed by the reference because overlapping ranges have been held to be a prima facie case of obviousness. *In re Malagari*, 182 USPQ.

Claims 9-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Materne et al (6,172,138).

Art Unit: 1754

Materne '138 discloses that aluminum doped precipitated silicas are formed by a co-precipitation of a silicate and an aluminate (note column 5, lines 26-28). This fairly suggests that the aluminum compound must be present before any precipitation is taking place, i.e. the aluminum compound can be added before or during the addition of an acid to cause the precipitation of both silicate and aluminate.

Since the process of forming precipitated silica is well known in the art, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to optimize the order of addition of the reactants to obtain the desired product.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ngoc-Yen M. Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1356. The examiner is currently on Part time schedule.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Stan Silverman be reached on (571) 272-1358. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306.

Art Unit: 1754

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed (571) 272-1700.



Ngoc-Yen M. Nguyen
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1754

nmn
April 19, 2004